



Catalonia (and the Catalan-speaking lands) before and after the Eleventh of September 1714: The International Congress organised by the History-Archaeology Section of the IEC in Barcelona as part of the Tricentennial (1714-2014)

Ricard Torra*

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The Eleventh of September this year marks 300 years since Barcelona fell into the hands of Philip V's Bourbon troops. This is a landmark event which, as is common knowledge, marked a turning point in our country's history. The institutions, freedoms, rights and also duties of the Catalans of that period languished between the day after the defeat and the issuance of the Nueva Planta Decree on the 16th of January 1716. The Catalan institutional edifice shaped over more than six centuries fell just like a house of cards under the hurricane-force winds, never to return, even though memory and especially the vast amounts of documentation about that period preserved in both the archives of the Principality and elsewhere have kept them alive for both scholars and in memory.

The Eleventh of September 1714 was also one of the many episodes that should be included within the general framework of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713/1715), an international dynastic conflict that pitted the European powers of the day against each other in the dispute between the Hapsburg and Bourbon crowns. The first great war of the 18th century stands out for its multiple fronts, high number of victims – almost 1,250,000 – and enormous financial outlay that both sides had to make owing to the fascinating propagandistic battles with which they strove to conquer public opinion, as well as the national dimension it took on in Spain, with the struggle between two different conceptions that sought to impose their models of state: the absolutism rooted at the Castilian court versus Catalan constitutionalism.

To commemorate the Tricentennial, this year the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans organised an international congress entitled “Catalunya (i els Països Catalans) abans i després de l'Onze de Setembre de 1714” (Catalonia [and the Catalan-Speaking Lands] Before and After the Eleventh of September 1714) which was held from the 24th to 27th of February 2014. The purpose of the congress, in the words of its

scientific coordinator, Antoni Simon i Tarrés, a member of the IEC's History-Archaeology Section, was to take stock of the historiographic output on events that left such a profound mark on Catalonia's historical formation. The two lectures and ten reports that made up the bulk of the congress were divided into two basic strands: first, the territorial scope of the conflict that stretched beyond the boundaries of the Principality to include other zones within the Catalan-speaking lands in the story, with the presence of researchers from there, and secondly the analysis of the war and repression from a multidisciplinary standpoint. These latter reports examined topics like the military impact, social and political changes and repercussions that the conflict had on the language and culture, the role of the institutions and the effects on law.

The opening day was attended by the president of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Mr Joandomènec Ros, who welcomed the participants along with Antoni Simon.

After establishing the scholarly criteria of the congress and reviewing its objectives and avenues of inquiry, the keynote lecture was delivered by Patrici Pojada, a professor of Modern History at the Université de Perpignan. It was entitled “Unes Catalunyes sense Noves Plantes? La Guerra de Successió d'Espanya i les seves conseqüències vistes des dels nords” (Catalonias without Nuevas Plantas? The War of the Spanish Succession and its Consequences as Seen from the North). In this lecture, he examined the specific cases of Roussillon and the Vall d'Aran in the course of the War of the Spanish Succession and especially the situation after the conflict. In Pojada's opinion, the real reason for studying Roussillon and the Vall d'Aran was that neither was subjected to the Nueva Planta Decree for different reasons. During the conflict, the Vall d'Aran shifted from Bourbon to Hapsburg hands in 1706 and then back again in 1711. The influence in this region of the Barons of Les – who served as the governor of the region – and its clear leaning towards the Bourbons from the very start meant that once the conflict was over, unlike the rest of Catalonia, the Nueva Planta Decree was

* Contact address: Ricard Torra. E-mail: Ricard.Torra@uab.cat

not applied in Vall d'Aran, nor was the system of *corregiments* (townships). It was not applied *de iure*, but, as Pojada recalled, it was indeed applied *de facto* after 1726, when the Baron of Les came to preside over the General Council of Aran as if it were a *corregiment* by another name.

The situation in Roussillon was different to that in the Principality and the Vall d'Aran as the consequence of the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659). Despite the fact that Louis XIV had pledged to respect features like the municipal system of the countships and Catalan law, the fact is that after the second half of the 17th century, Roussillon underwent various reforms, such as the introduction of the French language at the Université de Perpignan, changes the number of places in the administration of justice and the introduction of job-buying in municipal posts. In Patrici Pojada's opinion, while the north did not have to suffer from the Nueva Planta, it was gradually denatured on an institutional level, while its ties to the south were gradually severed. This can be seen, for example, in the changes in Roussillon's trade during the 18th century, when it ceased to be oriented towards the Principality and became geared towards France instead.

The second day started with a report by Antoni Simon, a professor of Modern History at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and member of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. Entitled "Abans i després del 1705. L'autogovern de Catalunya com a objectiu polític de la classe dirigent catalana" (Before and After 1705. Self-Governance in Catalonia as a Political Goal of the Catalan Ruling Class), his purpose was to reaffirm the claims made in his recent publication (Antoni SIMON. *Del 1640 al 1705. L'autogovern de Catalunya i la classe dirigent catalana en el joc de la política internacional europea*. PUV, Valencia 2011) by bringing in new documentary evidence that confirms his hypotheses. His primary claim is that the main reason the Catalan ruling class sided with the Hapsburgs during the War of the Spanish Succession was to recover the self-governance that had been lost after 1652 and that under no circumstances did the Catalans wish to intervene in the general affairs of the Spanish monarchy in 1705, as other authors have claimed.

Carme Pérez Aparicio turned her attention to war and repression in Valencia during the War of the Spanish Succession in her report entitled "Després d'Almansa. Guerra i repressió al País Valencià" (After Almansa. War and Repression in Valencia). Beyond surveying the institutional repression decreed by Philip V with the suppression of the Valencian *furs* (code of law) on the 29th of June 1707, this historian focused on the coercion stemming from the war to recover the strongholds which were still loyal to the Hapsburgs after the Bourbon victory in Almansa, as well as the coercion used to establish domination over the territory over which the Bourbons had wrested control. In this sense, Carme Pérez Aparicio recounted several kinds of repression: confiscations of the

goods owned by Hapsburg supporters, the burning of Xàtiva for instructing the rebel strongholds that did not peacefully submit to Bourbon weapons, deportations of the people from pro-Hapsburg centres to places with proven loyalty to the Bourbons, and threats to the people of Valencia with the instalment of a force to prevent any potential pro-Hapsburg conspirators. The Bourbon regime did manage to control the country, but it paid a very high price: the actions to establish this control generated a broad state of opinion against the monarchy in Valencia, and not only among those who had supported the Hapsburgs; many pro-Bourbon amanuenses wrote to the king to ask him for mercy on a people who had suffered greatly.

Under the title of "El paper de les Illes Balears en l'etapa final de la Guerra de Successió" (The Role of the Balearic Islands in the Final Stage of the War of the Spanish Succession), Miquel Àngel Casasnovas, a PhD in History and member of the Institut Menorquí d'Estudis, analysed the development of the War of the Spanish Succession on the islands, stressing the complexity stemming from the multiplicity of powers present and the lack of territorial unity in politics: the only tie that bound them together was the figure of the monarch. Therefore, each island played a unique role in the course of the war. For example, while Mallorca served as a provisioning base for besieged Barcelona, Menorca played a more strategic military role. Obviously, the other islands played a more minor role because of their smaller size. The islands' eventual choice of the Hapsburg side can primarily be explained by the presence of the English-Dutch navy in the Mediterranean. In the case of Menorca, the speaker stressed the importance of the British, who had grasped the strategic importance of this island since the 1660s. In fact, once the island had gone over to the allied side, the only concern of the British seemed to be ensuring the direct control that the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht had given them. As a result, the Menorcans managed to save themselves from the Nueva Planta decree, even though the British tolerated only those institutions that did not challenge the power of their domination. In contrast, Mallorca returned to Bourbon hands in 1714 and its former privileges were eliminated by the Bourbons' Nueva Planta Decree.

In his report entitled "Més enllà de la Guerra de Successió. La Sardenya catalana sota el domini dels Savoia" (Beyond the War of the Spanish Succession. Catalan Sardinia under the Domination of the Savoy), Lluís-J. Guia Marín, a full professor of Modern History at the Universitat de València and a research affiliate at the Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, examined the political-institutional continuities with Catalan roots on the island of Sardinia throughout the entire 18th century, even though it had been separated from the territories of the Crown of Aragón. In the late 17th century, the island of Sardinia was fully integrated into the realm of the former Crown of Aragón in terms of both its institutions and its culture.



FIGURE 1. Opening event of the international congress "Catalonia (and the Catalan-speaking Lands) before and after the Eleventh of September 1714". Left to right: Patrici Pojada, professor of Modern History at the Universitat de Perpignan; Joandomenec Ros, president of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans; and Antoni Simon, scientific coordinator of the congress.

Unlike other geographic regions, the War of the Spanish Succession was not a traumatic event for the island. Although it switched sides several times, its internal institutions remained intact even after the arrival of the Savoy dynasty on the island after 1720. Institutions like the Sardinian Audience and the Sardinian Courts, which wrote their laws in Catalan, demonstrated Catalonia's enduring influence on the island. Linguistically, too, the survival of Catalan, even though it gradually lost ground first to Spanish and later to Italian, shows us the importance of Sardinia's ties with the lands of the Crown of Aragón until well into the 18th century.

The first report on Wednesday the 26th of February entitled "Guerra i quotidianitat militar en temps de setge: Barcelona i Catalunya el 1713-1714" (War and Everyday Life in the Military in Times of Siege: Barcelona and Catalonia in 1713-1714) was delivered by Adrià Cases. This report sought to explore the dynamics during the last year of the war in the Principality in an effort to shed light on the interconnections between the two poles of resistance: namely, Barcelona and Cardona. During this period, the Catalans were trailing behind the events happening on the larger international scene. In Madrid, it was believed that the war was about to end in early 1713, which was the reason for the Junta General de Braços's sudden decision

to resist to the death in July 1713. From then on, the court of Madrid was totally determined to win back Barcelona at any cost, and to this end it started the siege of the capital of Catalonia, first taking the plain in order to block the front, and later, after July 1714, mounting a traditional siege in which they managed to blockade the city entirely, leading its defenders to suffer from hunger and desperation. Regarding the inland regions of the country, after the loss of the Castellciutat fortress in late 1713, the war had been centred on Cardona, as the only stronghold of resistance left. The main goal of the Hapsburg army in the inland regions, commanded by the Marquis of Poal, was to try to break the cordon that the Bourbons had established around Barcelona, although they never managed to do so. After the fall of Barcelona, the castle of Cardona had to be handed over and the official status of the Hapsburg army was removed, even though the majority of its leaders had gone into exile to avoid retaliation.

After that, in the report entitled "El model polític català de 1702-1706 i la seva liquidació borbònica" (The Catalan Political Model from 1702-1706 and its Bourbon Liquidation), Eva Serra, an emeritus professor at the Universitat de Barcelona and member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, surveyed the Catalan constitutionalist system prior to the imposition of the Nueva Planta decree in January

1716 and how the Nueva Planta, with absolutist roots, came with a new fiscal model that totally eliminated the dynamics that had developed in the Crown of Aragón until the early 18th century. Catalan pactism, which was grounded in institutions that were quite representative for that period, continued developing in the Courts of 1701-1702 and 1705-1706 despite the legislative halt entailed by the time elapsed since the convocation closed in 1599. The legislative reforms aimed to reinforce all the key elements sought by the participants in the Courts except the return of control over ballot voting, which neither Philip V first nor Archduke Charles later agreed to grant in the meetings with the Braços. Eva Serra believes that all of this modern legislative output should be contrasted with the institution of laws stemming from the Nueva Planta, which were clearly archaic in nature.

After Eva Serra's talk, researchers Josep Catà and Antoni Muñoz took the stage with the talk entitled "La repressió després del 1714: execucions, empresonaments i exilis interns" (The Repression After 1714: Executions, Imprisonments and Internal Exiles). First, Josep Catà set forth the main objectives of Bourbon repression and the instruments used to achieve these objectives. Catà showed that this repression was largely planned before the Catalan defeat, especially in broad strokes, and that it aimed to ensure Philip V's control over the Principality. In terms of the specific instruments of repression, Josep Catà mentioned the annulment of Catalan public law, the confiscation of public property, the increase in fiscal pressure on the country, the permanent presence of an occupying army made up of more than 30,000 troops and repression over the resistant elites. In turn, Antoni Muñoz focused his report on the repression experienced by the military and political elite of the pro-Hapsburg resistance in Catalonia, exercised in the guise of imprisonment and exile. Despite the wording of Barcelona's capitulation, leaders of the resistance like Antoni de Villarreal, Josep de Rocabertí and Guerau de Peguera suffered from the consequences.

In his talk entitled "Acomodació i resistència a les polítiques de minoració de la llengua catalana (1716-1888)" (Accommodation and Resistance to Minority Policies of the Catalan Language [1716-1888]), Albert Rossich, a professor of Catalan Philology at the Universitat de Girona, analysed the policies used after the defeat on the Eleventh of September 1714 to gradually replace the Catalan language with Spanish, the Catalans' attitudes towards this effort and the reasons behind these attitudes. When the Nueva Planta Decree entered into force, a period began, the first half of the 18th century, which was dominated by the different rules that affected the Catalan language in official spheres. The culmination of this process came with the Royal Warrant issued on the 23rd of June 1768. All of these rules, however, were not viewed by society as attempts to destroy the Catalan people, who were primarily illiterate and monolingual and more likely to identify with the old public legal system abolished in

1714. With the advent of the Enlightenment, however, Rossich notes that there was a paradigm shift, at least among some of Catalan society: the most prominent Catalan proponents of the Enlightenment, like Antoni de Capmany and Antoni Puigblanch, chose to abjure an "archaic" Catalan language and were instead in favour of replacing it with "modern" Spanish. The marginalisation of Catalan spread until well into the second half of the 19th century, when the Renaixença managed to revive it.

The last day of the congress started with the report entitled "L'altra cara de la Guerra de Successió a Catalunya: la violència contra la població civil" (The Other Face of the War of the Spanish Succession in Catalonia: Violence against Civilians) delivered by Josep Maria Torras i Ribé, an emeritus professor of Modern History at the Universitat de Barcelona. With the failure of the allied offensives against Madrid in 1707 and 1710, Catalonia became the main theatre in the conflict. From then on, there seemed to be a trend every time the Bourbons surrendered a site: freedom in exchange for capitulation, withdrawal of the Hapsburg troops with military honours and, once they were gone, the unleashing of repression against the civilians. After Lleida and Tortosa fell into Bourbon hands and the Terres de Ponent front was stabilised, the Bourbon army undertook a kind of psychological warfare aimed at demoralising the inhabitants of the region. Many chroniclers concur in stating that the Bourbon officers had issued their troops orders to attack civilians in a bid to impose their domination over the land. Even the companies of "Miquelets" (irregular militiamen) participated in this scorched-earth policy. According to Torras i Ribé, the last gasp of Bourbon occupation was experienced with some apathy by people who were tired of so many years of war. Still, on a local scale, even the Bourbon chroniclers acknowledged the acts of revenge committed by the "Botiflers" (Bourbon supporters) once the war was over.

The last report in the congress, entitled "El Decret de Nova Planta i l'evolució posterior del dret català" (The Nueva Planta Decree and the Subsequent Evolution of Catalan Law), was delivered by Tomàs de Montagut, a professor of the History of Law at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and a member of the History-Archaeology Department of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. In early 18th-century in Europe, there were basically two conceptions of sovereignty and law. The first was a conception governed by the rule of law and political pactism – *mos italicus* – which could be found in some regions, such as the Principality of Catalonia. The other was a conception with French roots – *mos gallicus* – which emerged around the works of François Hotman and Jean Bodin, who situated the monarch at the core of sovereignty and the production of law. The Nueva Planta Decree, dated the 16th of January 1716, emerged precisely from this latter legal tradition, paired with the Spanish tradition, which was also markedly absolutist in nature. Therefore, the Principality suddenly changed from the postulates of *mos italicus* to

those of *mos gallicus*. However, despite the fact that the change was sudden, Tomàs de Montagut also explained that before the Nueva Planta Decree was announced, there was an intense debate within the Council of Castile about the changes that were needed in the governance of Catalonia and its institutions, a process that generated numerous consultations with and reports by figures like Francesc Ametller and José Patiño.

The scholar charged with delivering the closing lecture was Oriol Junqueras, a PhD in the History of Economic Thinking and Professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Entitled “L’Onze de Setembre entre la història i la memòria” (The Eleventh of September between History and Memory), the lecture had two parts. In the first, Junqueras recalled all the reasons why the Catalans chose to side with Archduke Charles in 1705 – economic rea-

sons, such as the Principality’s relations with the northern European powers; political reasons, like the similarities between the Catalan constitutionalist system and that of its allied powers; and simply the repression against the ruling class exercised by Castile in the previous years – and the reasons why the Junta General de Braços decided to resist to the death in 1713. The speaker then reflected on the memory of the Eleventh of September 1714 and how it has managed to survive until today. He distinguished between two key moments in the process: the first phase, when the authorities tried to erase the memory from the minds of people; and the second phase when people lost their fear of speaking publicly about this episode. In short, the memory of the Eleventh of September managed to live on thanks to society, which has preserved it until today.